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ABSTRACT

The idea that "natural speech" as well as written discourse can be organized is now commonly accepted. There is also evidence that natural speech contains more coherence indicators than written texts do. This article proposes that one type of organizer, pragmatic connectives such as "therefore, then, thus, while, however, but" that have become void or depleted because they serve no real semantic function, emerged in Hebrew as the language gained its modern spoken form. These void pragmatic connectives (VPCs) entered the language with other transferred forms because the need for simulation of impromptu speech was pressing. It is argued that as Hebrew became established as a spoken language, the VPCs lost their connection with the culture they were drawn from and were later augmented by independent VPCs emerging within vernacular Hebrew. This suggests that the emergence of VPCs and other discourse organizers in languages follows a universal principle, with a larger repertoire emerging in vernacular than in literary language. (MSE)

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THE EMERGENCE OF SPEECH ORGANISERS IN A RENOVATED LANGUAGE: THE CASE OF HEBREW VOID PRAGMATIC CONNECTIVES

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The emergence of speech organisers in a renovated language:
The case of Hebrew void pragmatic connectives

The idea that "natural speech" is organised discourse seems by now to be commonly accepted. The traditional belief that only written, i.e. "planned", discourse may be "organised" (and hence that dis-organisedness is a pertinent, if not distinctive, feature of speech) seems to have become obsolete. Moreover, the findings of many new contributions to the subject seem to indicate that precisely because "natural" speech is in many respects "not planned in advance", it uses more coherence indicators (for segmentation, demarcation and concatenation) than planned (written) texts do. This holds true, I believe, even for cultures such as French, where very strong norms of making discourse coherence explicit prevail. Yet it is neither quantity nor (relative) proportion *per se* that seems to distinguish between the organization in natural and in planned/written discourse. I would like to argue that there are *different types* of organisers that pervade each of these categories respectively. That is perhaps not exclusively, but still overwhelmingly so.

Two categories of discourse organisation (coherence) are normally dealt with in the literature. The first category is a variety of fundamental discourse principles such as *order*, *succession* (and/or *contiguity* and *vicinity*) or semantic *parallelism*. The other category consists of specific morphemes/lexemes which specifically express organisational relations both locally and formally. They are often called "pragmatic connectives". "Therefore", "then", "thus", "while", "however", "but" are some such items. As indicated above, some cultures tend to require these organisers more than others do. For instance, French will endeavour to use them more than any other European language. Obviously, such policy makes French texts, if compared with other languages, more explicit (and "explici*tated*") as regards logically analysable discourse relations. But, on the other hand, the strong pressure upon discourse producers to employ these items clearly generates many instances of pseudo-logically motivated discourse, as the organisers employed often become

relatively or highly *depleted* (or "void"). Thus, in many instances of written English discourse where such items as *thus, however, yet* or *but* are employed, they no longer carry a semantic, logically analysable (or "explicitatable") function, but merely work as formal vehicles for demarcation and concatenation. Discourse could, as it were, very well do without them with the same semantic results. Yet they do not become "superfluous", because they help both encoder and decoder navigate along a specific discourse. The decoder's attention is drawn by them more readily, and quite instantly, to discourse shifts so that the uninterrupted flow, as it were, is more easily segmented for him. The encoder, on the other hand, has gained with these items an easily accessible repertoire of organisers which at the same time do not involve rigorous, clearly semanticised relations. I believe that it can be sustained that *the more depleted the organisers, the quicker (and smoother) encoding becomes.*

This distinction between fully semanticised (and logically analysable/ explicitatable) organisers on the one hand and (relatively) de-semanticised (or depleted, Weinreich 1964) on the other, seems not to have been given proper attention in the literature. With the growing preoccupation with pragmatic relations in discourse, only "semantic(ised)" pragmatic connectives are normally dealt with. The behaviour of the same connectives (and various others) when the "logical" constraints no longer apply is either ignored or just mentioned *en passant*. These depleted connectives, which I labelled several years ago, for the sake of conceptual symmetry, Void Pragmatic Connectives (or, in short, *VPC*'s), which are probably marginal in written discourse, play such a major role in impromptu speech that ignoring them is a disturbing inadequacy. This role, I would like to argue, is a pertinent feature of speech, generated by the specific needs of a speech situation. If one of the needs of speech is maximum ease in both production and understanding, then, surely, at least part of this 'ease' can be more efficiently achieved thanks to the fact that large sections of discourse are depleted, and consequently 'automatised' to various degrees.

"Automatisedness" and "depletion" are two correlated aspects. The more "automatised" signs are, the more depleted they are likely to eventually become, and vice versa. As far as organisers are concerned, I would like to argue that when they become "depleted" they actually are employed in discourse very much according to the same principles which normally govern

non-verbal gesticulation. It has been amply sustained that, with the exception of "semanticised" gestures (such as those for 'yes' and 'no'), interlocutors hardly notice gesticulation in their own culture (while remaining very much aware of gesticulation in other cultures), though they fully perceive it and process messages with its help. The same holds true for VPC's. People are unaware of having used them, even when one tells them they did just a few seconds after they themselves produced them; similarly, listeners would not admit having *heard* them. Yet, when VPC's are *omitted* when normally expected by the conventionalised models of speech in a certain community, interlocutors clearly feel that certain elements are missing. Sometimes this absence is described as "bookish" or "artificial", "insincere", "snobbish" and the like. On another level, the fact that language teachers and language manuals hardly teach them to non-native speakers is also evidence of the incredibly low awareness of them so current even among "specialists". Other evidence indicating both unawareness and miscomprehension as regards VPC's are the attempts to explain their usage exclusively in terms of fully semantic "meanings" (a good example is Varilyeva n.d.). There have also been attempts by teachers and other controllers of language to banish them altogether from "the good usage" with the explanation that "they do not mean what they normally do and hence are symptoms of language corruption".

A passage by Stålhane (*Folkhemska*, Stockholm 1956) is a typical example of this attitude. "Det är mer och mer tydligt", says Stålhane, "att vi svenskar har en språklig svaghet för det – otydliga. De orimliga överdrifterna, den meningslösa underbetoning, de uppluckrande omskrivningarna befriar oss från en verklig meningsyttring." (p. 86) "I en intressant radioserie", he adds, "med deltagande av två docenter och en professor, började inläggen nio gånger på tio med mer eller mindre betonat *ja* – alldeles oberoende av sammanhanget." (p. 58) And the phrase which seems to have made him most furious is "Nå, då gick vi då" (p. 59). Such indignantly negative judgments of the high frequency of VPC's in impromptu speech can be furnished for any language. But everyone knows that if the quantity of VPC's drops below a certain level, for all but formal discourse situations, a speaker's language would be considered "non-authentic", and if the language he uses happens not to be his mother tongue, this would be taken to be part of his "foreignness".

The use of language in impromptu speech by non-native speakers, as well as interlingual translations, are highly informative cases of the status of VPC's and their active control. With non-native speakers, two diametrically opposed patterns of behaviour can be observed. In the first pattern, speakers totally ignore the existence of VPC's and consequently either omit them altogether (thus often making a highly 'bookish' impression) or introduce those VPC's they normally use in their own mother tongue. My files show instances of French people and Italians unnoticingly using 'bien', 'eh bien', 'alors', 'allora' or 'bene' in English. Perhaps the most amusing case I have encountered so far is that of a native speaker of English, who lives in Israel and with whom I used to have long talks in Esperanto. His Esperanto was impeccable, yet he frequently used *Hebrew* VPC's. The fact that he did that, instead of employing his own native English items, was probably due to the pattern of behaviour with non-native speakers, which involved a quick adoption of the VPC's in the newly acquired language with an over-exaggerated use as a result. This phenomenon has been observed for many other linguistic levels with new learners whose command of the language has not yet reached the level of standard balance a native speaker normally achieves. Another interesting phenomenon is that quite often the foreign VPC's are introduced by these new learners into their own mother tongues, after they have neglected the latter for a certain period.

As for translation, this involves understanding of written texts, usually fiction, where some simulation of impromptu speech has managed to crystallize. Naturally, such a simulation cannot be identical with authentic impromptu speech, and is by nature a stylisation of it. Yet in certain literatures, quite elaborate models have emerged, which in many respects come close to natural speech. If one has to translate from such literature into others, where the level of awareness, the degree of use and functional manipulation of VPC's are low (or almost non-extant), clearly what emerges will be inadequate renderings. I should like to emphasise that the availability of a certain repertoire in a language for certain tasks does not necessarily mean the same repertoire is available, in part or in full, for other tasks, too. There is no reciprocal admissibility of items between systems within the same language polysystem. With VPC's, this is even more remarkable owing to the low awareness of their function on the one hand and their rejection by standardisers on the other. An interesting case would be a contrastive study of Russian and English literatures. Both Russian and English widely use VPC's in im-

promptu speech, yet English *literature* has made relatively poor use of them, while Russian prose developed them into a major compositional and stylistic device. As a result, whether actually "understood" or not by English *translators*, the Russian VPC's are often either omitted or misrendered in English translations.

This last point makes it clear how much we depend on the existence of a spoken colloquial if we want to investigate the nature of VPC's and their usage in a language. Written sources, in most languages, are even less sufficient for VPC's than for the other constituents of impromptu speech. One can hardly reconstruct their use in previous historical phases, let alone for languages which are no longer spoken. It is therefore of the utmost interest for our purpose to study cases where certain processes are either recent, or almost observable 'in the making'. For instance, an interesting case would be the phase when various *lingua francas* have become a true mother tongue for a second generation of native speakers. Similarly, planned languages, such as Esperanto, can furnish no less interesting information. In contradistinction to other so-called "artificial" languages, Esperanto has managed to become a mother tongue for quite a remarkable number of families world-wide. Hebrew, which will be discussed in greater detail in the following, is an excellent case of this sort. It differs both from *lingua francas* and from Esperanto not in principle, but in its richness of resources and codified traditions, as well as in the degree of success, which is almost unique. What it can demonstrate is the primariness of VPC's in the sense that they are not accidental results of some blind depletion mechanism in language (and sign systems in general), but generated through depletion by primary communicational needs. This hypothesis can no doubt be inferred from the material available for 'finalised' systems as well. Yet the possibility of corroborating it with the help of a case where the very processes of VPC emergence can to some extent be more closely followed, makes this case even theoretically valuable.

2

Hebrew, as is well known, gradually ceased to be used as a spoken language until it probably almost stopped being one during the 2nd century C.E. This does not mean that there were no longer places where it was continuously

employed as a daily tongue, but the majority of the Jewish people, in both Palestine and the diaspora, went over to using other languages. The ultimate decline was caused by the brutal suppression of the second Jewish revolt against Rome (135 C.E.), the results of which were an almost total destruction of Judea, while Galilee, which did not take part in the rebellion, suffered less damage. Yet while no longer daily spoken, Hebrew continued to function as the major standard language of the Jews for practically all daily purposes which necessitated communication in writing. It would not then be true to describe it either as exclusively 'literary' or 'dead' in any sense. On the contrary, it was very much 'alive' due to the fact that almost no other language ever succeeded in gaining the same status and prestige. As a result, it developed all the time in the sense that it was made to fulfill the changing needs of written communication. Even when from time to time another language was adopted by one or another Jewish community, its use gradually became complementary rather than alternative. If texts of general interest were produced in that language, sooner or later Hebrew versions of these would emerge to make them widely acceptable to all communities. Arabic in the Middle Ages did not push Hebrew aside, although it definitely usurped various sections previously occupied by the latter. The same holds true for Jewish-Spanish and Jewish-German (later called Yiddish) in Europe. Moreover, the need to read the Hebrew texts aloud on various occasions made it necessary to have accepted phonetic standards. As a result, out of the many historical pronunciations which might have been current in Palestine, only two varieties ultimately survived. One probably originated in the Galilean tradition, while the other perhaps went back to the Southern Judean one. As a codification of everything related to reading the sacred text and the prayers was of utmost importance, even such issues as metrics eventually became a matter of official culture.

Due to its common use in various contexts, Hebrew never imposed insurmountable problems on its users, and even when objective difficulties occurred, they never led to a rejection of the language. Thus, Solomon Maimon still considered it quite natural to write mathematic works in Hebrew, modern Hebrew newspapers started appearing during the first third of the 19th century, and secular literature in Hebrew was not given up as an adequate tool for artistic writing in favour of some other available language, although some of the Hebrew writers in Eastern Europe also made use of

the common Jewish vernacular at one time or another. The fact that Hebrew was not a spoken language does not seem to have disturbed anybody, and the ideology preaching its 'revival' did not emerge until relatively late. Even when there emerged a political movement for national revival, Zionism, the idea that Hebrew could become a spoken vernacular for the politically revived nationhood was not at all self-evident or generally accepted.

In practice, however, the fact that Hebrew was not a spoken tongue generated many difficulties most of all for fiction writers. From the very moment that they were no longer interested in confining themselves to describing ancient settings of Biblical times, rendering actual Jewish life with a non-spoken vernacular posed many problems to be solved. No doubt simulation of natural speech constituted the toughest problem. This was the case not just purely for linguistic but also for literary reasons. As the norms of literary Realism penetrated into this literature, most writers could not rest satisfied with a neutral, highly classical literary dialogue. They had to create something which could remind the reader of a more authentic spoken tongue. As a result, they adopted and developed sophisticated methods, by which Hebrew domesticated features from the Yiddish vernacular on the one hand and from the most available adjacent literary language, Russian, on the other. This use of Russian was necessitated because while Yiddish could supply certain features of impromptu speech, it itself lacked a literary simulation technique and possessed no accepted stylisation for it. For the fact that a certain vernacular is used in speech by a certain community does not automatically mean that it possesses accepted means for introducing it into literary texts. In order that a certain language might be stylised there must emerge patterns (or models) by which the way it is transported will be efficiently recognisable and thus functional for the required literary purposes. To achieve this, literature needs experimentation. But as experiments are not always allowed the necessary span of time, because there are too many immediate needs for a literature to be able to wait too long, at least part of the solutions used are eventually taken from whatever source is available. This is why both Hebrew and Yiddish literatures during the 19th century tended to make quite extensive use of the Russian repertoire of solutions. When speech had to be reported, Russian could already offer a great number of models. No wonder that both Yiddish and Hebrew dialogue are often modelled after Russian principles on both compositional (organisational) and material (stylistic) levels.

There is no doubt that Yiddish, like any other spoken vernacular, possessed a specific stock of VPC's. Yet because it turned to Russian for solutions, the latter became a filter even for Yiddish. As for Hebrew, the need for the simulation of impromptu speech was so pressing that with the large stream of other transferred items, VPC's came in as well. In my papers "Russian VPC's in Hebrew literary language" (forthcoming in *Theoretical Linguistics*) and "Gnessin's dialogue and its Russian models" (forthcoming) I discussed the selection principles by which Hebrew created such ad-hoc VPC's. These could never gain the unequivocal status of "natural" VPC's, as they either remained incomprehensible to the reader, or else he had to decipher them by reconstructing them *in terms of another* language. Furthermore, the methods and particular solutions could not be unified throughout literature, as there was no common extant repertoire in the linguistic reality of Hebrew itself, from which it could be taken. In spite of this, those writers who elaborated models, including VPC's (in contradistinction to others who stuck to previous traditions where this policy was yet unknown), having been guided more or less by the same norms, have arrived at very similar, or even identical solutions. Thus, two major options for the simulation of speech in fiction were already available about the turn of the century. On the one hand, there persevered the style which prevailed prior to the extensive domestication of Russian (and Yiddish) patterns. On the other, there emerged a rich repertoire of VPC's, which constituted part of the domesticated repertoire at large. What role did this repertoire play for the development of Hebrew as a spoken vernacular in Palestine, and later in Israel? It seems that it played a major role for the *literary* language, in both canonised and non-canonised literature, where it persisted for a long period of time. In the spoken vernacular, however, the facts seem to have been different.

3

A precise history of the emergence of Hebrew as a spoken vernacular has not been written yet. Unfortunately, much has already been forgotten. Although a relatively short time has elapsed since the beginnings of modern Hebrew (around the 1890's), the evolution of the language and social, cultural and political developments have been so dynamic that hardly any phase

persisted for more than a short span of time. There are therefore no agreed-upon views on this issue, and a great deal of the superficial descriptions we often get in current history books is coloured by myth.

It seems, however, that the origins of modern Hebrew were not Hebrew *belles lettres* exclusively, in spite of the fact that literature constituted the core of cultural activity and the axis around which the whole ideology of the national "revival" revolved. Confronted with the immediate needs of actual speech, part of which by nature could not be controlled by deliberate decisions (e.g. intonation, pitch, pronunciation, etc.), the first groups of speakers made use of whatever source that was within reach. Although the passive understanding of written Hebrew was relatively wide-spread, the *active* abilities of the would-be speakers fell much behind. Willy-nilly they used loan-translations from their mother tongue, which thus became a direct substrate of the renovated tongue. Naturally this process did not function equally for all aspects of language. While more noticeable, and therefore avoidable in principle, in grammar and vocabulary, it was definitely less so in less "conspicuous" and more "obscure" domains of language among which one should, from the point of view of the speakers' awareness, count void pragmatic connectives.

The use of the mother tongue by most non-native speakers of Hebrew was in principle identical with the use made of the latter in literary language, but the fact that Yiddish here played a greater role than Russian eventually provided different specific solutions. No identical solutions have therefore been achieved with the elaboration of a VPC repertoire in literary discourse and the spoken vernacular respectively.

Let me remind you that the "literary" VPC's consisted almost entirely of domesticated items. Yet the fact that they were accepted in the literature which ultimately was accepted as canonised made most of these items an integral part of official Hebrew (i.e. "correct" in the eyes of standardisers and purists). On the other hand, the solutions the vernacular provided, which were not admitted into new literature even as late as the 1950's, were more often than not considered "incorrect" and even "vulgar" and hence "dispensable". This is, of course, a perfect illustration of the "cultural" rather than "natural" status of "authenticity" and "correctness" in a language. For, if 'authentic" items were rejected as "non-Hebrew", while items fabricated at the writing-desk and never adopted by current use were accepted as "correct",

then it must be recognised that not all instances of "natural authenticity" necessarily or univocally also become "culturally authentic" as well. The aggressive campaigns by teachers and other purists against the poor VPC *az* ('then'), and, to a lesser extent *tob* (pronounce: /tov/, 'good, well') as arch-pollutors of Hebrew, completely resembles the indignant attack by Stålhane on Swedish *ja* and *då*. Yet, both *az* and *tob*, undoubtedly loan-translations from Yiddish, have become the most usual commencitives (initial VPC's) and concatenators in Hebrew impromptu speech. Several other connectives pertain to the same category, such as *tir'e/tir'i* (= English 'look here' or 'I say'), used as a commencitive, *ve-kakha* ('and so') used as a finitive (a signal of 'end of segment') and perhaps *al kol panim* ('at any rate'), used as a transferrer (a signal of change of subject).

The case of *az* is particularly illustrative of the decision mechanism in substrate interference. I believe it must have emerged by domestication of the Yiddish VPC *iz* (e.g. "iz vi filt ir zikh?" = well, how do you feel/how are you?) through accidental *sound similarity*. The fact that Hebrew "az" means 'then', and is, furthermore, identical in sound with the Yiddish particle "az" (= English 'that', Swedish 'att'), probably made the "searching process" of colloquial Hebrew particularly smooth. On the other hand, it was perhaps this conspicuous use of Yiddish, still felt by the first generation/group of users, that made it such a target for vehement criticism.

Both the literary set of VPC's and the emerging colloquial one have thus arisen through transfer from other languages. The opposition that emerged between them was that of *high/official* + *non-current* vs. *low/non-official* + *current*. Also, their status as VPC's cannot be described as completely equal. The literary set should be described as second-hand, lacking that degree of immediacy that actual VPC's normally have in both impromptu speech and simulations. The failure of speakers to identify the literary items as potentially usable in speech for pragmatic functions simply has led to ignoring them. On the other hand, the function of the substrate in this issue (as in many others) was a result of unplanned (and often unconscious) operations, which is the reason, I believe, that it became such a success.

It should be emphasized, however, that both literary and colloquial VPC's were generated through transfer and domestication by non-native speakers. These could still do "back transfer" of domesticated items when necessary (e.g. in reading literary texts), at the same time as their original

colloquial connectives exerted power upon their Hebrew speech. These factors, however, no longer prevailed for the new generations, for whom Hebrew gradually became more and more of an *exclusive* mother tongue. For them, a great number of the items encountered in literary texts became highly enigmatic, while no other linguistic system persisted in imposing itself on their impromptu speech. Their use of VPC's no longer reflected their habits in some previously utilised mother tongue. They became, so to speak, liberated from pressures of another culture.

This is where the most crucial part of our VPC test case truly begins. The loss of the possibility of resorting to another language now left Hebrew alone to confront with its own resources, unhelped, as it were, by the needs of impromptu speech. If, for instance, the VPC repertoire were to stay inaugmented, that could at least raise certain doubts as regards the universal principle of discourse organisation by means of, inter alia, void pragmatic connectives. This however turned out not to be the case, as there seem to be sufficiently solid data indicating that some independent VPC's ultimately have managed to emerge.

However, this development was far from instantaneous. I would like to claim (though the data are not beyond doubt) that indeed the rate of VPC's in current Hebrew impromptu speech must have dropped simultaneously with the decreasing interference from the substrate. Moreover, I believe that *contemporary* colloquial Hebrew uses VPC's relatively sparingly, at least in comparison with some European languages. I suggest that the use of foreign languages by Hebrew native speakers might also reflect the status and position VPC's hold in their own vernacular. I have registered, for instance, that English spoken by Israelis tends to be almost void of any VPC's either English or Hebrew in form (in contradistinction to such habits as observed with other speakers of other languages), especially when the speaker, although possibly fluent in the language, has never used it intensively in some English-speaking country. On the other hand, Israelis who have stayed for longer periods in English-speaking countries often insert English VPC's into their *Hebrew* speech, at least as a transient pattern of behaviour (normally for some time after having come back home from a longer stay abroad). Other indicators of low-rate usage of VPC's are radio and television talk programmes. In these, I have observed a definitely higher elimination rate even of the old colloquial VPC's which are normally highly frequent in non-public impromptu speech.

This pattern differs quite remarkably from Swedish, English, American or French habits. Remember that in the classical piece by Stålhane, even "a docent and a professor" did not try to control their colloquial VPC's, let alone football players and other non-highbrows interviewed in English or Swedish mass media. This high control pattern in Hebrew cannot be simply described as a result of education pressures (or "brainwashing", if you will). Firstly, 'education' did not concentrate on the whole category (the nature of which was not understood), but rejected various specific *items* only. Secondly, even education and brainwashing can exert only limited power as constraints on actual impromptu speech. It would, therefore, be more plausible to see the cause of this behaviour in the relatively weak position VPC's assume in colloquial Hebrew.

The contemporary situation, then, is extremely fluid. Yet it seems that the weak position of VPC's is a transient phase rather than a pertinent feature of the modern vernacular, an unavoidable gap between the disappearance of substrate pressures and the emergence of home-made alternatives. In recent years, a growing number of VPC's can be attested, the origins of which cannot be related to any adjacent system. Their recency can perhaps be sustained by the fact that older speakers, including native ones, are not yet acquainted with the new items, and some will probably never adopt them. Another indicator of recency is perhaps the almost complete lack of awareness of their existence, an unawareness which is even greater in degree than that prevailing as regards the older VPC's. Such new items are *lo* ('no') and *ken* ('yes') both commencitives, or *lo ki* ('no because'), mostly used as transferrer (i.e. a finitive + commencitive). Such conversation sequels as: * ' – It's a nice day"--*" – No yes it's a nice day", or * "Are you completing now your B.A. studies?" – "No yes I do" are quite typical and widely attestable at all levels of society. The similarity between these and several counterparts in various languages (Swedish *'nämen ja'* or Russian *'Da net'*) are truly striking, but there is no evidence of, nor any reason to hypothesise, any sort of interference. Such similarities should of course be used by those interested in establishing the rules which govern the selection of items-to-be-depleted for use in pragmatic functions. In our case, I would not yet venture to attempt an explanation of the specific selection of the items discussed. Why precisely "no", rather than some other form, has been selected cannot be satisfactorily explained at this stage of research.

The main point here is not the specific item, but the fact that void connectives have emerged independently of other language systems. Their source, usage and distributional contexts are no longer reflections of habits in some other culture. And, furthermore, they now seem to be growing in number. How long it will take the official culture, as manifested in literary traditions, to recognise them in the first place and then to make use of them for literary purposes is not only unpredictable but also not necessarily significant as regards their status and function in impromptu speech. There are no universal rules of speech simulation operating in all literary languages. I already mentioned that whereas Russian literature has exploited the colloquial Russian VPC repertoire to the utmost, English literature has hardly made any real use of the English colloquial repertoire, while Dutch seems hardly to recognise the existence of such an option (though more checking needs to be done before conclusive evidence is established). Therefore Hebrew colloquial VPC's may go on being developed and their use may be intensified, while the literary language may stick to its old quasi-VPC's fabricated in Eastern Europe, or may drop them altogether. At any rate I am convinced that the emergence of independent VPC's in the vernacular firmly sustains the primariness of the VPC function, in the sense that it imposes on a language depletion procedures in order to produce those functors that are so badly needed in verbal communication.

I would like to conclude this paper with a brief remark on the varying VPC rates of various individuals. While the need for VPC's is universal, certain individuals use them, even within the conventions of their particular culture, more intensely than others. This might be a symptom of "uncertainty under tension", so beautifully parodied by Gogol' with the speech of Akakij Akakijevich (who mostly pronounces no other elements than depleted stock, VPC's included). On the other hand it may be an indicator of something totally different, which I would label "the speaker's strong need to organise his discourse", or "the speaker's anxiety to draw the maximum attention to all his shifts of mind". This endeavour to produce highly coherent texts in impromptu speech through VPC's does not necessarily coincide with other features of coherence (or cohesion) in the same specific discourse. More often than not, VPC's function as the last resort for organisation and coherence in an otherwise quite elliptic and vaguely concatenated speech. This is where we leave the soil of semiotic and socio-linguistic analysis and go over to psychol-

ogical considerations and idiolect analysis. Deplorably, our knowledge of these aspects of language is even more limited than that of the other problems I have discussed, which is why I must desist venturing into such territories.

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